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PROGRAM News

STATION WTOP Radio

DATE June 23, 1982 4:35 P.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Spy Bill

IRA MELMAN: President Reagan signed into law today a bill that makes it a crime to disclose the names of American spies. Reagan flew by helicopter to the CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia so CIA employees could witness the bill signing. Reagan called covert agents the heroes of a grim twilight struggle.

But the ink was barely dry on the bill and the words had only just left the President's lips when the American Civil Liberties Union denounced the new law and swore to challenge it in the courts.

Jerry Berman of the ACLU says the new law cannot stand.

JERRY BERMAN: We believe that it's clearly unconstitutional, in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution, the freedom of speech. And we have stated all along that if this legislation became law, that the American Civil Liberties Union would challenge it in court if an appropriate case arose. We are urging the press to go forward and publish the news as they see fit, even if that means naming a covert agent.

MELMAN: the penalty for naming U.S. spies, under the new law, is up to four years in prison and \$15,000 [sic] in fines.

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